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# STRONGSVILLE

"Crossroads of the Nation"

Founded 1816

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# STRONGSVILLE

"Crossroads of the Nation"

Founded 1816

# PICTORIAL STRONGSVILLE

This book will help you visualize the development of the community of Strongsville. To better understand the present you should be aware of the past . . . Join us in a look into the past in Strongsville, Ohio.


Presented by

Neal W. Coughlin

and the

Strongsville Historical Society

This book is dedicated to the memory of Howard and Velda Chapman, the founders and benefactors of the Strongsville Historical Society and Village. Their foresight has left the community of Strongsville with a living representation of the past.

Photos by David Liam Kyle

Many thanks go to Gladys and Frank Kocsis who, with the Chapmans, worked many long hours to help the Historical Village project get going. Frank's gifts of labor in restoration of the buildings and work on the grounds made it possible for the Village to be an instant success. Gladys worked with Frank as his inspiration and was also responsible for the guides in the buildings and led many groups as they experienced the past. Without their dedicated time and effort our community would not have such a unique museum.

# The Founding

With the defeat of the Indians at the battle of Fallen Timbers on August 21, 1794, "Mad Anthony" Wayne went on to force the Indians to sign the Treaty of Greenville in June of 1795. This treaty gave the land of Ohio, west of the Cuyahoga River, to the Indians. Only the land of northeastern and the southern two thirds of Ohio was open for settlement. The Cuyahoga River in 1795 served as the western boundary of the U.S.A.

Although Ohio had become a state on March 1, 1803, it was not until the signing of the Treaty of Fort Industry in 1805 that the boundary of the United States could move west of the Cuyahoga River to include all of the Northwest Territory and Ohio.

Prior to this, the land of the Connecticut Western Reserve, purchased from the United States, west of the Cuyahoga, was not available for settlement. Survey of this land was completed in 1806 and the land was divided into forty-seven drafts. The division of this land was made on April 4, 1807 and later the land in our area was deeded to several owners on April 26, 1807. Oliver Ellsworth, member of the Continental Congress, author of the phrase "United States" in the Constitution, Senator from Connecticut, author of the Judiciary Act of 1789 and the third Supreme Court Chief Justice, acquired a total of 41,335 acres in the reserve of which 8,388 were in Township No. 5, 14th Range, now called Strongsville. This amounted to slightly more than half of the township which included 16,002 acres. For this land he paid $13,673.00 amounting to $1.63 per acre. Other owners were the Governor of Massachusets, Galeb Strong (third cousin once removed of John S. Strong) with 7,361 acres, John Frost with 245 acres and Seth Porter with 8 acres. Oliver Ellsworth lived less than a year after this and his land was left to his twin sons William and Henry. Because the land was not selling, Henry Ellsworth, upon graduating from Yale in 1811, headed west on horseback to look over the land and check on his manager of the land, Judge Turhand Kirtland of Poland, Ohio. This 1400 mile horseback ride with his brother-in-law took some ten weeks. When he did arrive in the Strongsville area on June 29, 1811, all that he noticed in this wilderness as he traveled with compass and marked trees as his guide, were several rattle snakes.

The War of 1812 slowed development of the area but caused the threat from Indians to diminish. As the war ended in 1815, the Ellsworths looked for an aggressive young man to manage the sale of their western lands. Agreements were made with the 44 year old John Stoughton Strong in 1815 to purchase some of the Ellsworth land and to act as agent for the sale of the rest of the frontier land.

In early 1816 John led a party of from seven to ten adults and one child along the northern route to the Reserve, through New York and then to the southern shore of Lake Erie. With a stop in Cleveland during February, the party of pioneers went west to the mouth of Rocky River to pick up the trail south along the river to the settlement of Columbia. From Columbia they headed east until they found the markers for their township. They proceeded to the center, and with great haste, erected several log cabins for shelter.

This original group of pioneers were not strangers to each other - most were related in some way. John Stoughton Strong brought his oldest son Emory. His brother-in-law, Elijah Lyman, Sr. was part of the group along with Guilford Whitney, a relative of John's wife. With Guilford Whitney

came his daughter, Bernicey, a young mother of 21 who served as cook and cabin keeper for the men. With her came her one year old daughter, Eliza, and husband John Hilliard. William Fuller Jr., Obadiah Church, Zachariah Goodale, and George Fox Gilbert, were also part of the group, but their relationship is unknown. These adults and one child formed the nucleus of what would later become the modern community of Strongsville.

The first major task following the building of shelters from mother nature and the wild animals, was that of surveying the land because family friends back east were anxious to come west and settle where land was less expensive and much more suitable for farming then their land back in the rocky New England region. Immigration into the township blossomed with the arrival of many new families, causing the area to become an official township on February 25, 1818.

Much recognition must be given to John S. Strong as the entrepeneur of the settlement. He managed the sale of the land and sought to bring the folks with proper skills into the area, such as the second town doctor following the death of his son-in-law, who was the first town doctor. He built the first grist mill in the area along with a saw mill. The land was paid for in the barter system. This meant most of the land was paid for in cattle. John drove these cattle for the next 21 years to eastern markets to receive the necessary cash to pay off the Ellsworths. John Stoughton Strong dedicated the last 47 years of his uniquely long life to the development of the community that bears his name today.

*Neal W. Coughlin*

A wise man anticipates what the future will bring him from observing the experiences of the past.

Sophocles

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In the 1940's, the Commons, then called Strongsville Park, was a good place to stop. The Commons, the Center of Strongsville, was given to the inhabitants of Strongsville on April 1, 1821 by John S. Strong for the consideration of one dollar. The Commons, Cemetery and land for an Academy were all given at this time.

Photo by David Liam Kyle

Winter and summer scenes of the Commons along the Cleveland-Wooster Turnpike that we now call Pearl Road

Commons used for World War II Honor Roll

Baseball game during the 1916 Centennial celebration

Centennial Parade and Cabin in 1916

The Old Town Hall was dedicated on December 31, 1879. It cost $3,945 to construct. The vote by the citizens for its construction was 77 for and 21 against. Before this was built the community had used a log cabin for over 50 years as the first town hall.

The bell from the Old Town Hall was removed in 1976 as we celebrated our National Bicentennial and placed in the entrance of the new Municipal Center.

The new Town Hall, built in the early 1950's, then enlarged into the newer Municipal Center in the 1980's.

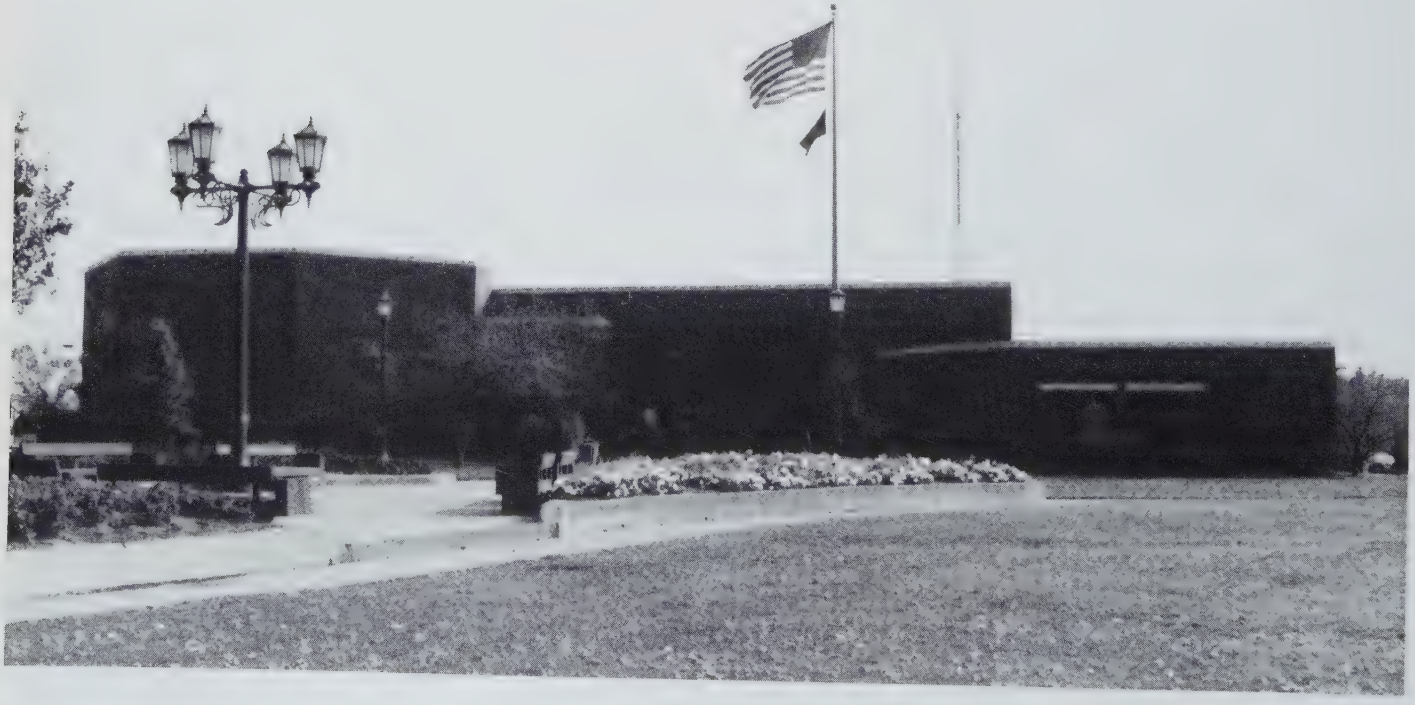
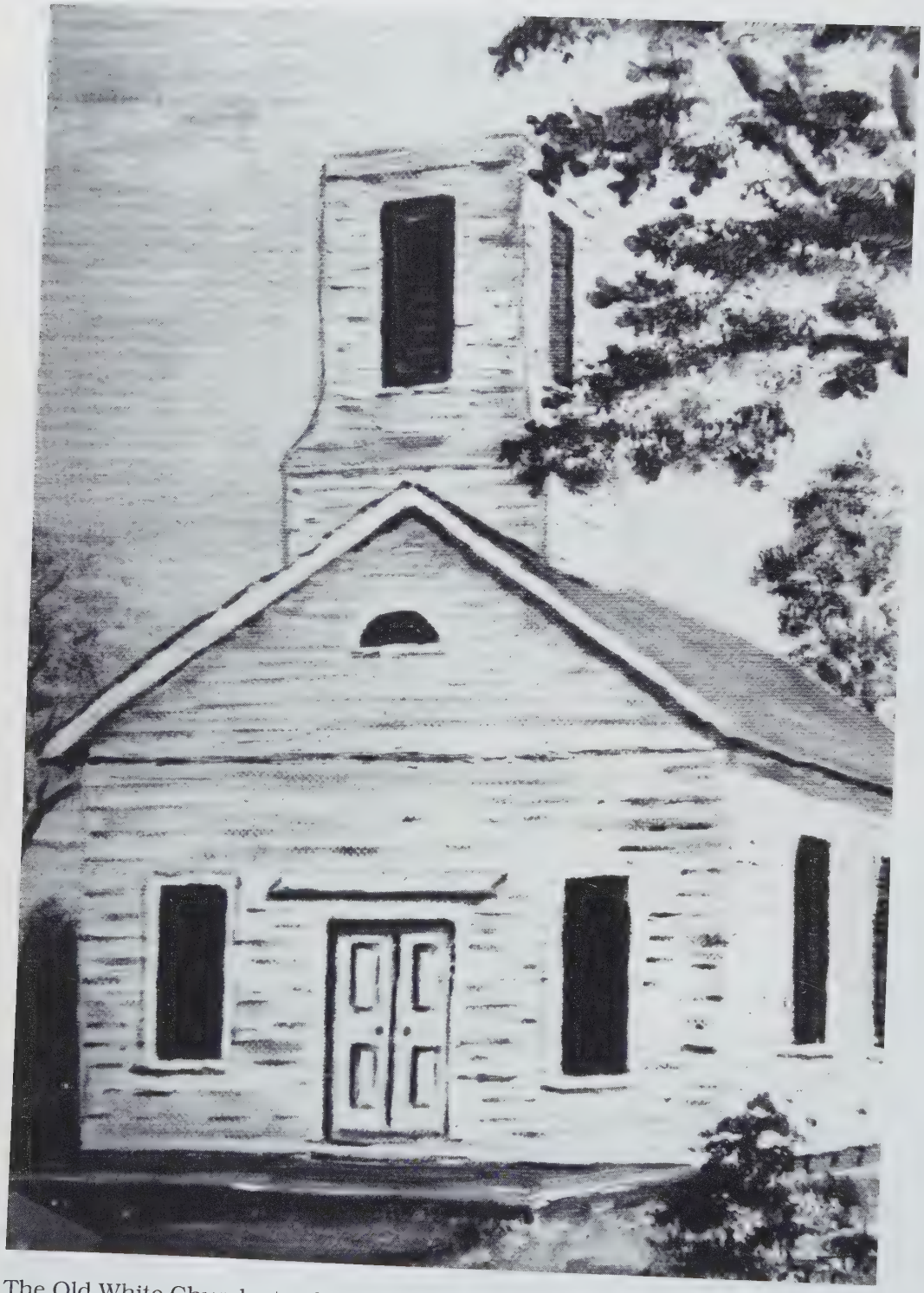


Photo by Sherri Sandberg

At the Centennial Cabin are Rev. Clarence Dosner (L) and Richard Gibbons.

The Commons in 1991 as we celebrated the 175th anniversary

Photo by Sherri Sandberg

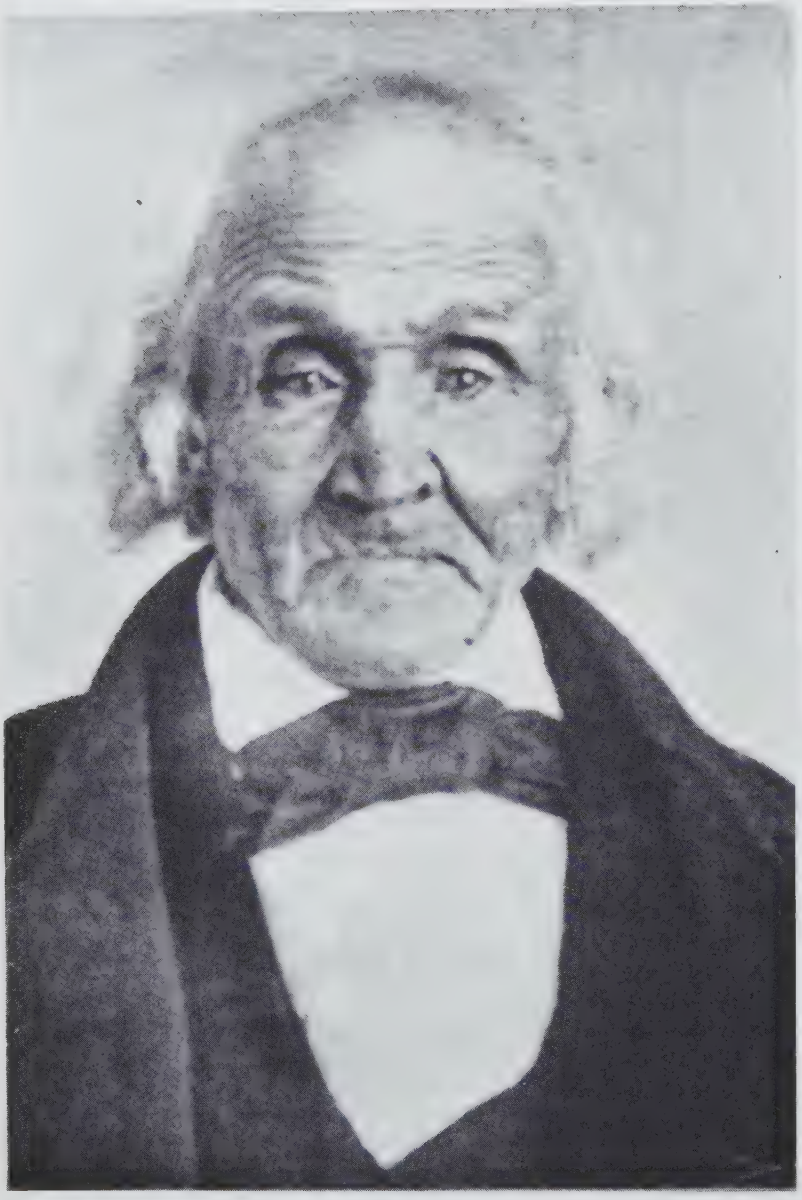


Surrounding the Commons have been many different structures.

The Old White Church stood at the east end of the Commons. It was dedicated in 1836. Rev. D. C. Blood was the pastor when this first Congregational Church was built. There was a broad platform extending across the front of the building. As you passed through the huge front doors, you entered a large vestibule in which were two immense iron stoves. They were heated red hot in the winter and pipes from them ran almost the entire length of the audience room. On either side of the stove room was a broad winding stairs that led to the gallery above which covered three sides of the building. In later years the church was remodeled and used as a barn for storage.

Photo from a historical painting by Velda Chapman.

In 1891 Mr. J. P. Roof came from Cleveland and built this large mansion at the east end of the Commons. There were several large barns in this complex. All that is left from this estate is a stone from the gatepost with the name of J. P. Roof. This stone is now at the Historical Village. Also from this complex is one small building that was moved when the town hall was built in the early 1950's and has been incorporated into a home on the east side of Strongsville.



Founder
John Stoughton Strong
1771-1863

On the north side of the commons, John S. Strong built his Federal Style home in the early 1830's. The roof line was soon changed and the house has undergone many uses. This is the oldest building on the Commons.

In front of his home he built a stagecoach tavern called by some the "fifteen-mile house" on the Cleveland-Wooster Turnpike. This was on the corner we now call Westwood and Pearl.

The Strong House was at this time a store owned by a Mr. Brown. John had also used his home for a store until 1839.

The Strong House has been divided into apartments in the past, and in the 1990's served as a dentist's office.

Also on the north side of the commons was Miss Paulina Gilbert's private academy that she opened in 1842. After it closed, it was purchased by the Graves family and was used as a home until they moved it to the back of the property, turning it into a three car garage. They built their new home on the front of the property where it still stands under the watertower. Pictured (above) with the Graves family on the front porch and (below) in its new location in the Historical Village

On the west end of the Commons stands our heritage from Alanson Pomeroy. The Greek-Revival buildings are a gracious focal point in the center of our modern community.

Built in 1848, the house was known as the "Old Homestead", and was also a stop on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. Today it still serves the community as a restaurant.

The Pomeroy Store was built in 1850, and was owned by different men during the time it stood along the Cleveland-Wooster Pike. It has been used as a school and Tea Room during the changes in its history. It no longer stands, but the shape of its foundation can still be seen on the lawn next to the Pomeroy House.

The Congregational Church was dedicated on January 27, 1853. Construction began when the subscriptions reached a total of $750.00. This 77 square rods of land that Mr. and Mrs. Strong had been deeded in 1819 to the Methodist Church. This church had a log cabin on this spot before moving their church to Albion.

Gertrude Pomeroy sits in her yellow two-wheeled cart with her pony, "Jim Crow". Along with her is her father, Dr. Harlan Pomeroy, a son of Alanson Pomeroy. They lived in Cleveland on E. 75th street and used the "Old Homestead" as a summer home. Gertrude has told us of a day long trip from Cleveland on a hot summer day in June, to the summer home in Strongsville. Her Aunt Mary had offered to drive the pony to the summer home so that Gertrude could have the cart and pony for her summer fun. The biggest problem, beside the summer heat and crowded cart, was the question of how much to pay at the two toll houses between Cleveland and Strongsville on the Cleveland-Wooster Turnpike. At the Brookpark Road toll house, they discovered that a horse and buggy was charged 4¢ and a team and wagon charged 7¢. Not knowing what to charge a pony and cart, the farmer's wife, in charge of the toll house, charged 3¢. At the next toll house, at what we now call Southland, they were charged half the price of a horse and buggy, or only 2¢.

Mr. Wilbur Bradley served as the Strongsville Maintenance Department. Here, in about 1912, we find him mowing the Commons. Behind him is what we now call Pearl Rd. The buildings behind him were part of the old Pomeroy store. Benbow and Clark Groceries and General Merchandise were in the brick building to the right. The building on the left had the sign of Howe and Clement as owners. Their sign advertised farm implements, buggies, surreys, and wagons, along with single and double harnesses. Poultry supplies were advertised and the slogan painted on the wall says "Get our prices before buying elsewhere".

Going north from the Commons we cross Westwood Drive. In the past this street has had four names. First it was known as Whitney Road because a farmer by that name lived there. Next it was called Easy Street because those with easy jobs, like doctor and superintendent of schools, lived on the street. Next it was called Depot Street because it went to the train depot at the corner of Westwood and Prospect. After the depot was removed the street name was changed to the present day Westwood. Here can be seen the fence at the side of the Pomeroy House and the scales on the north side next to the Strongsville Implement and Buggy Company.

The Strongsville Cafe and the Pomeroy House represent the past at this crossroads (above).

A 1991 view of Westwood Drive.

Photos by Sherri Sandberg

In 1839, Warner Strong, the second son of John Strong, built and opened his general store on the corner of Westwood and Pearl. This is probably the same property where his older brother, Emory, had built a wooden structure for his store. They worked together until 1834, when Emory died. This corner then probably went to his brother. Warner also built his house at 19133 Westwood, just next to the Pomeroy House Restaurant. John S. Strong sold the stock from his store (in the parlor of his house), to his son Warner for $1,836.66. Warner paid for the stock by exchanging land with his father. John was glad to get out of the store business because he never did like to do the bookwork — he prefered the outdoors.

The view from the front of the Pomeroy House looking north, at the turn of the century, shows a quiet tree lined street. This view of Pearl Road reminds us that once it was a narrow, elm tree-shaded road at this time called Main Street. As growth began in the early 1900's, the trees and the dirt road disappeared and Pearl Road started to grow wider and wider to accommodate the growth of traffic down the old Cleveland-Wooster Turnpike.

At the turn of the century, we see Warner Strong's Store has become the Strongsville Implement and Buggy Company.

Pierce Motor Sales, Inc., enlarged in the early 1950's with the edition at the north end. In 1933 the Dodge franchise and later the Plymouth franchise made this the only auto dealership in Strongsville.

Ralph C. Pierce (on the right), hands the keys to a new Dodge to Cleveland Indians radio broadcaster Jimmy Dudley in the late 1950's.

Here, in 1928, we can see the Oakland Pontiac service garage owned by Roy R. Pierce. He is the man at the left in the white shirt and vest. The business had been acquired from L. O. Bean by trading two houses he owned on Royalton Road to Bean for this automotive business. Ralph C. Pierce, his son, is the third from the right. This became the Dodge agency in 1933. Following the death of Roy Pierce, the family sold the business in 1961.

The west side of Pearl Road has gone through many changes. The Pierce family controlled these changes from 1928 to 1961 as the Pierce Motors Sales developed.

As progress changed the look of Pearl Road businesses, it can be noted that this building, Burnham's Cash Store, located between the Warner Strong and Pierce buildings, showed the watering trough in the lower left corner. The store advertised Tebbit's Ice Cream as a health food. The building was built by Lawrence Bedford. Lumber was purchased from Allison Clement and it had been grown in his own woods. The first floor housed Stadler's fertilizer and feed. The second floor housed implements and buggies. These were taken up and down by means of a ramp at the rear of the building. The third floor was rented to the Macabees for many years. Later, as the picture shows, the first floor housed the grocery business of Harry Burnham.

The new look of this same area shows the original Warner Strong Store now covered with a simulated stone front and called the Strongsville Cafe. The Pierce Motor Sales became the Larson Aluminum Building, and is now covered with a new layer of brick, and called the Crossroads Market Plaza Mall.

Photo by Sherri Sandberg

The east side of Pearl has also changed. Here at the turn of the Century can be seen the dirt road and Elm trees. This small, Greek-Revival house has had a long history. At one time it was owned by Elizabeth Bartlett then by Grant Atkinson, our first Mayor in 1927. The porch was added later, then enclosed. For years it has been known as Dr. Colbrun's Office Building.

Walter, the son of George Grant Atkinson, is seen here with his wife May. They sit next to their house on Pearl Road. Below is the same house, now covered with new siding and called the Rinaldi-Caputo Building.

This building on the east side of Pearl Road has not changed in size. The names are gone. This was Strongsville's shopping center, circa 1938.

Further south on Pearl Road, we look north from Bowman Drive in about 1933.

The Strongsville Methodist church, founded in 1819, started on the corner of Pearl and Royalton Roads, in a log cabin, where the Congregational Church now stands. In 1842 they moved to Albion and met in a new brick structure in 1843. The fire at Albion in the winter of 1843-44 caused a number of residents to leave. The church moved back to Strongsville and built this new frame structure in 1895 at a cost of $2,800.00.

Men of the church working on the playground on the south side of the church

The new sanctuary built in 1962 with the newer educational wing where that playground stood years before

Photo by Sherri Sandberg

Across from the Congregational Church on the corner of Pearl and Royalton Roads, stood Strongsville's first tourist cabins. They were built in 1947 by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schafer, in business there for 13 years. Each cabin had twin beds and a half bath. The rates were $4.50 for a couple, and one cabin had two double beds for a family at $6.00. Now the Huntington Bank and parking lot take this area.

This aerial view of the Commons and the crossroads of Pearl and Royalton, taken in the early 1950's, shows the tourist cabins at the left. The Old Town Hall can be seen and just above it the newer town hall.

Another important crossroads in the community was at the intersection of Prospect and Westwood. This area was called Vigil, Ohio. The name came from a school teacher who said you had to be vigilant as traffic crossed the area. First in the area was the B & O railroad and depot that was built through the community in 1888-89. This line has been Strongsville's only rail connection to the outside world and is still in use today as our important link to that world and our industrial parks. The line crossing at the bottom of the picture is the Southwestern Electric Line that went from Cleveland to Wooster. This was in operation from 1903 to 1931 and caused the death of Pearl Road since all traffic came to Prospect to catch the interurban. The Southwestern Electric Line was started by the Pomeroy boys.

This tressel brought the train to Strongsville over the valley which is now part of the Metro Park. The tressel still stands but can not be seen. Through the years, the trains brought the ash from the mills in Cleveland out over the tracks and opened the bottom of the cars to drop the ash down through the tressel, gradually covering it. The Eastland Road bridge can be seen at the top right of the pictures. A flood in 1926 destroyed the bridge and it was never rebuilt. This caused Eastland Road to be cut in two. Part is in Berea and part is still in Strongsville.

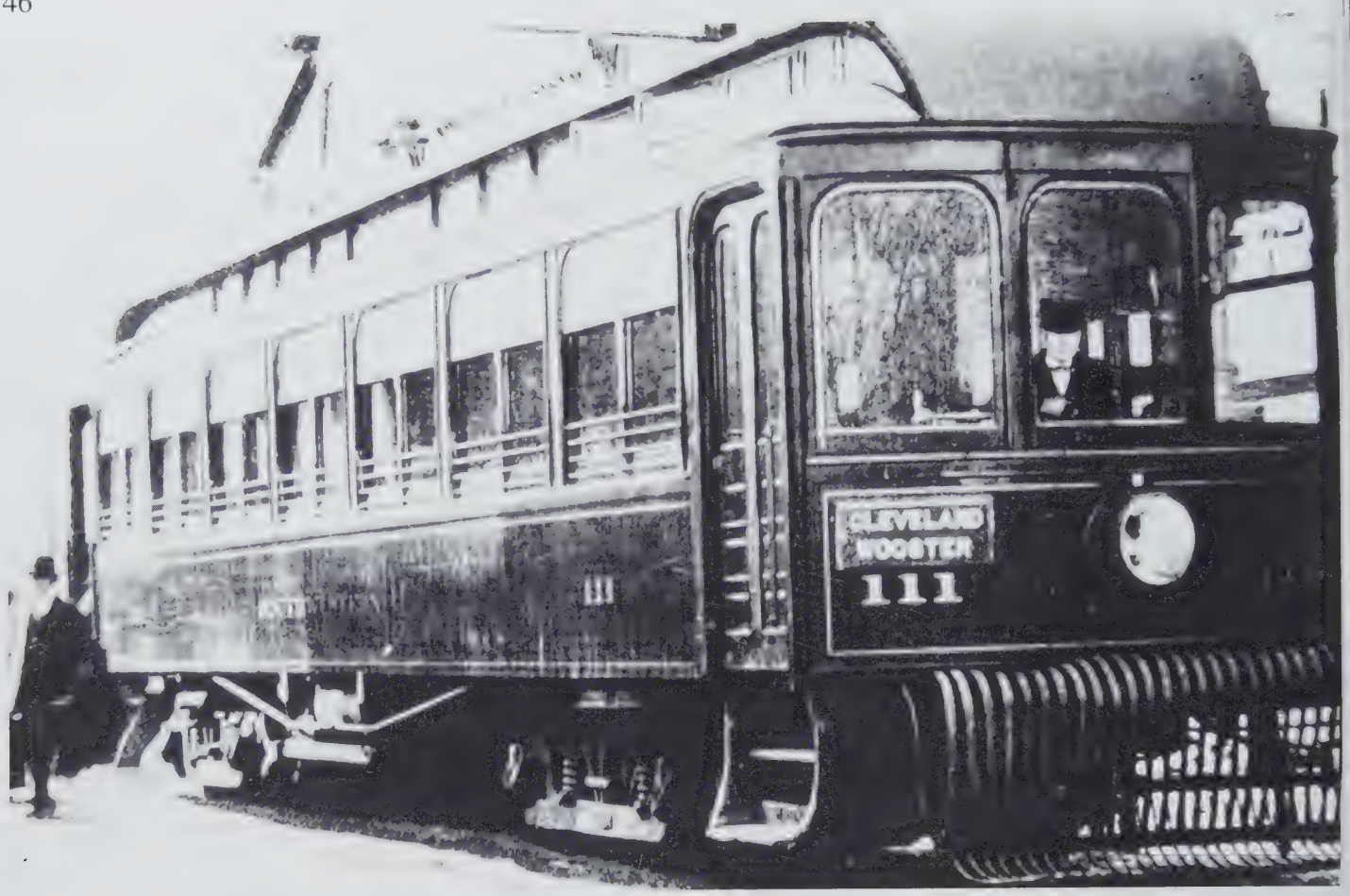
The ash covered tressel now brings the trains to our industrial parks. The old wood beams can be seen sticking out of the ash as you pass through the (1952) rebuilt underpass on the park road.

Photos by Sherri Sandberg

The store in Vigil was owned by various owners but is best remembered as the Siedel's General Store. You had to be vigilant as you came out of the store when the quiet electric interurban came by the door.

The high platform next to the interurban line was used by the farmers as they brought their ten-gallon cans of milk to the line for delivery to dairies in Cleveland. The cars would drop off empty cans for the farmers to fill in the evening. These cars could carry 200 to 250 ten-gallon cans to markets in the big city. This was the fastest way to get the milk to the market without refrigeration.

Yes, even the interurban had problems. Here, about 1905, near Lunn Road, we find the "trucks", or wheels, derailed the Southwestern.




The Cleveland Southwestern & Columbus Railways, or "Green Line", as it was commonly called, (because all the cars were painted green), started as a horse car line in Berea in 1884. It was a mile and a half line connecting two rail lines in Berea. In 1890 it was purchased by A. H. Pomeroy and his brother-in-law, W. D. Miller, and it developed into the interurban system that modernized the countryside.

The sign on the post tells us that this was stop 55 on the Southwestern Line along Prospect just north of Depot Street (Westwood).

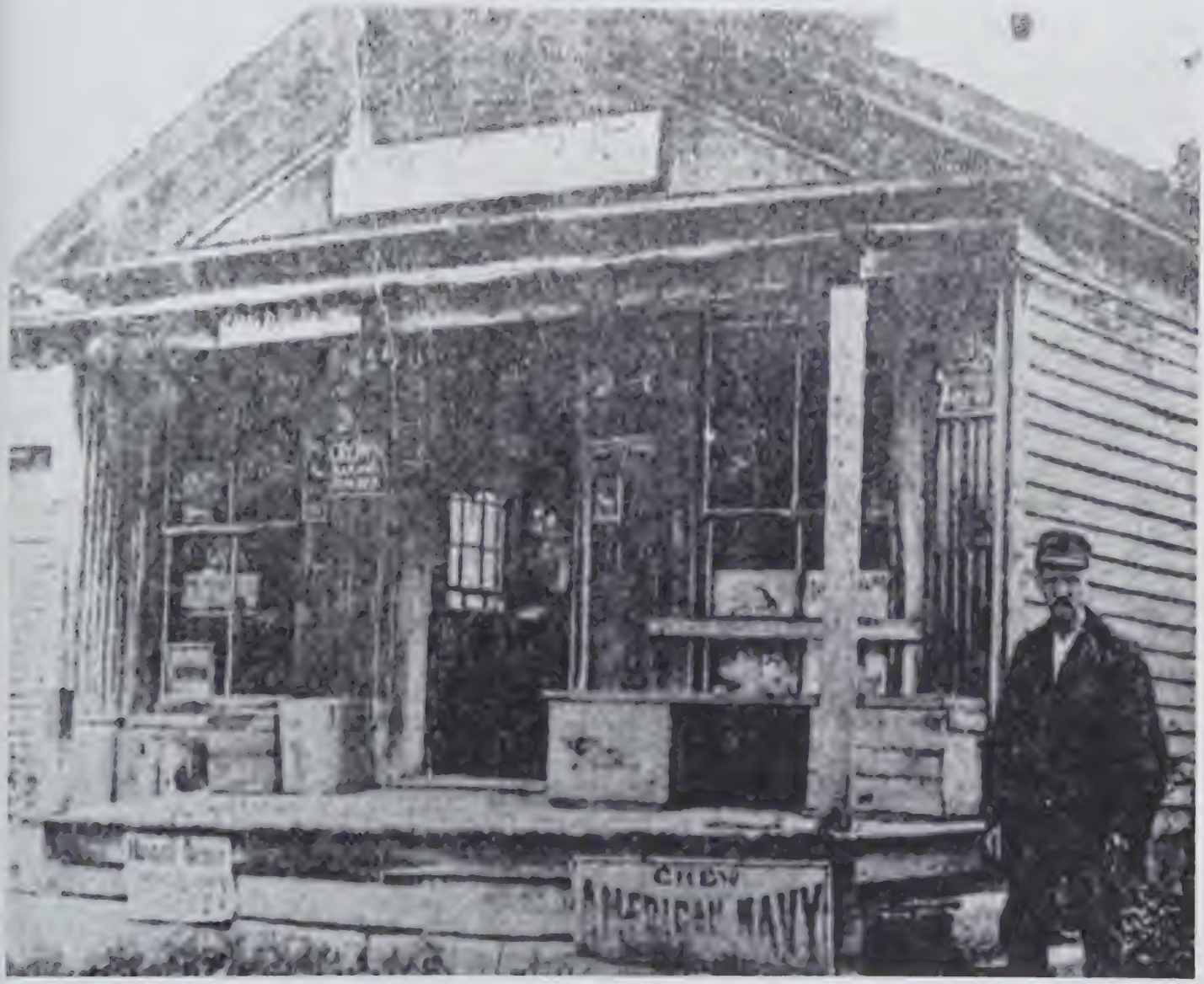
Down at the depot we see several Strongsville men. Third from the left is Joseph Siedel. Second from the right is Frank Siedel, his brother and also the father of Frank Siedel, Jr. the Ohio author. On the far right is Michael Ehrbar, the father-in-law of Joseph Siedel. The date is about 1910.

Crossing the tracks is an early school bus. The station was torn down in 1951.

Albion, the community at the northern end of the Cleveland-Wooster Turnpike, was a center of commerce and activity because of its location on the East branch of Rocky River. Here, in 1820, John S. Strong built the first mill for the Township, and started the development of the area.

Now the area of the mill is known as Bonnie Park, part of the Metro Parks. The bridge foundation and the dam can still be seen. The Albion community, started in 1834, had a carding works, three churches, schools, five stores, two taverns, three blacksmith shops, a tin shop, a scythe-snath factory, two wagon shops and two tailors. In 1840 a woolen cloth factory was built. At the close of the winter of 1843-44, a fire destroyed most of the business part of the village. In 1851 the railroad was built through Berea. At that time most of the businesses left the turnpike and caused Albion to fade from the world of commerce. Because of problems that the U.S. Post Office had with more than one town in the state having the same name, Albion was changed to Binola in 1890.

Photo by Sherri Sandberg




Mr. L. A. Tuttle ran a general store in Albion. He was famous for the soft drink that he made, sarsaparilla and rootbeer. He was a former music teacher at Baldwin University, and published music at his store. The building still exists in the Albion area.

The Bradley House, built about 1830, is one of the last old houses from Albion. This small Greek-Revival house has not been greatly altered through the years. It is now in the Historical Village.

The Lathrop House, built about 1870, is a fine example of Victorian-Italianate style. It was built by Hasen Lathrop, son of Thaddeus Lathrop, who was an engineer for the state of Ohio. He designed the Y-bridge in Zanesville. This house has been moved to the Historical Village and will be restored to its original look.

This old hotel in Albion, was probably on the west side of Pearl. Both photos were taken the same day, showing the folks, probably at the front and side of the same building.

Moving day, July 15, 1988. The Bradley and Lathrop Houses came south on Pearl Road from their original location in "Albion, Ohio" to their new location in the Strongsville Historical Village.
Photo by David Liam Kyle

The Roe-Chapman House was built at the turn of the century by Mr. Pepper. He built many of the homes in the center of Strongsville and also the first high school that is now the Board of Education Building.

The Roe-Chapman House is now the home of the Strongsville Historical Society. The Historical Village surrounds the house on the property deeded to the Society by Howard and Velda Chapman. Photo by Sherri Sandberg

The Roe children play with their horse on the grounds of their home.

The Methodist Church Annual Lawn Fete was held on the Roe property. This was the beginning of what we today call "Homecoming" and is now held on the Commons. This is probably a birthday party.

The Chapman Log Cabin was dedicated as we celebrated the Bicentennial of our nation in 1976. This was the beginning of the dream that the Chapmans had for a village of different structures representing the development of Strongsville. This cabin represents the beginning of our community back in 1816.

Mrs. Ruby Gormsen sits in front of the hearth in the cabin, while Mrs. Marian Craig quilts with the help of the light from the window.
Photos by Sandy Barnosky

Howard Chapman paid Max DeWitt the traditional one dollar for the Baldwin House that the Congregational Church sold to the Society. Velda Chapman tells Howard where to dig as ground is broken for the first home to be moved into the Historical Village.

On December 22, 1980, the Baldwin House was moved from behind the United Church of Christ. It passed the Pomeroy House, where it was first located, and moved on to its new location at the Historical Village.

The Dr. William Baldwin House, an early Western Reserve Cottage, was built in 1823. This house represents one of the first wood frame buildings in the center of Strongsville. For thirteen years Dr. Baldwin served as the town doctor before moving to Tecumseh, Michigan.

Miss Gilbert's Academy came to the Village on November 25, 1983. This was one of our private schools that took the place of a high school. This 1842 building is one of the three academies that were built in the center of Strongsville. Used as a home and later a garage by the Graves family, the building now houses a school room and an unusual collection of hats from the Roe Millinery Museum. Carol Maatz sits at the millinery work table. Photo by Sandy Barnosky

The Olds' General Store came from Marks Road near Boston Road, the area called Beebetown. Owned and operated by Mort Olds from 1927 to 1964, this general Store represents the type of store that served Strongsville for many years. Mr. Harley Fuller describes to his brother, Dr. M. P. Fuller, and Mort Olds, the fish that got away.

Now in the Historical Village, the Olds' General Store serves as an example of the past to visitors. Miss Jeanette Olds worked with her father in his store and serves as a guide in the store yet today.

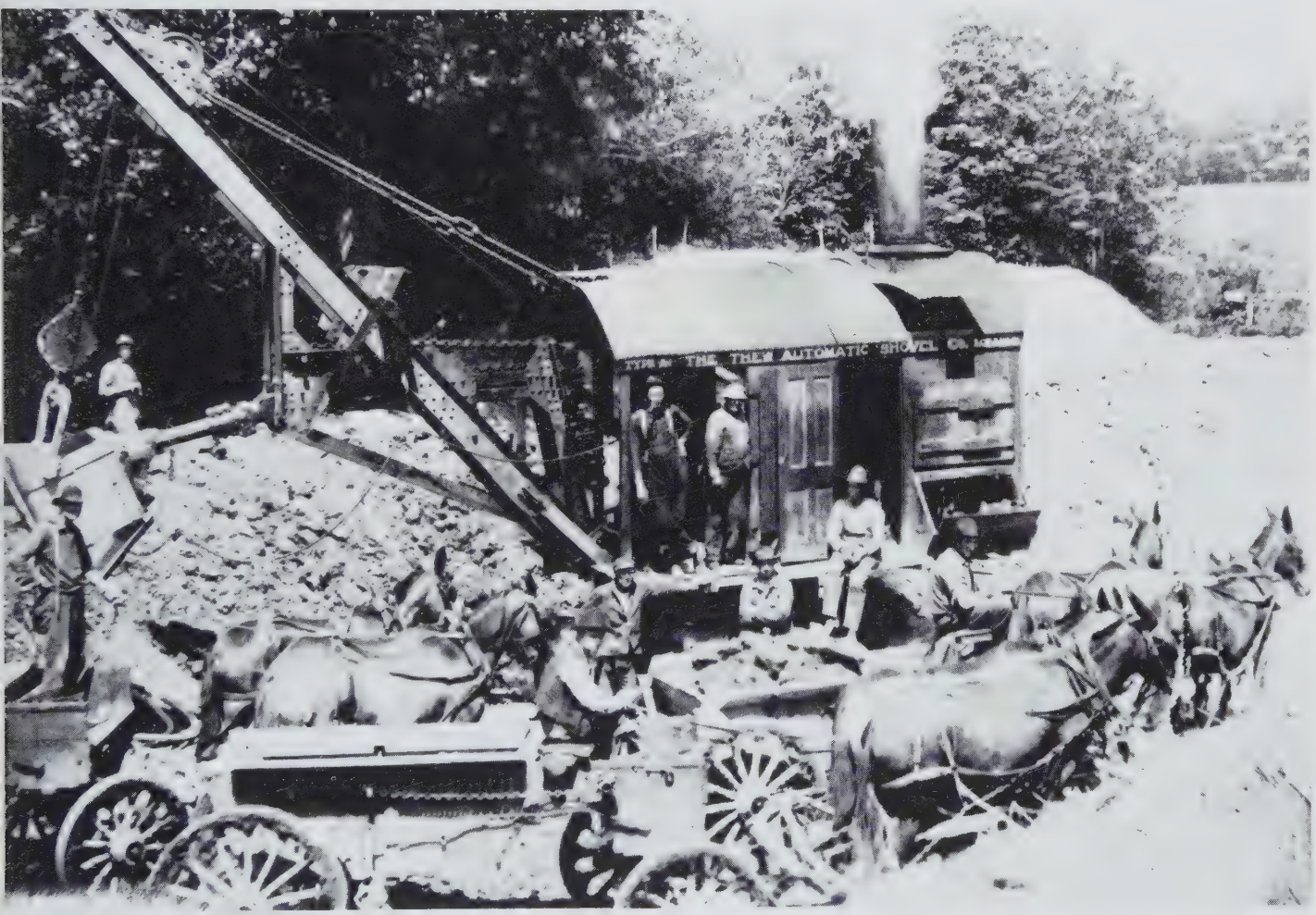
Congresswoman Mary Rose Oakar checks the time on the sundial in the herb garden of the Historical Village and comments to Howard Chapman how the Village is a place where time has stood still and how the Village has preserved the times past for the future time travelers, the younger generations.

Photo by Sandy Barnosky

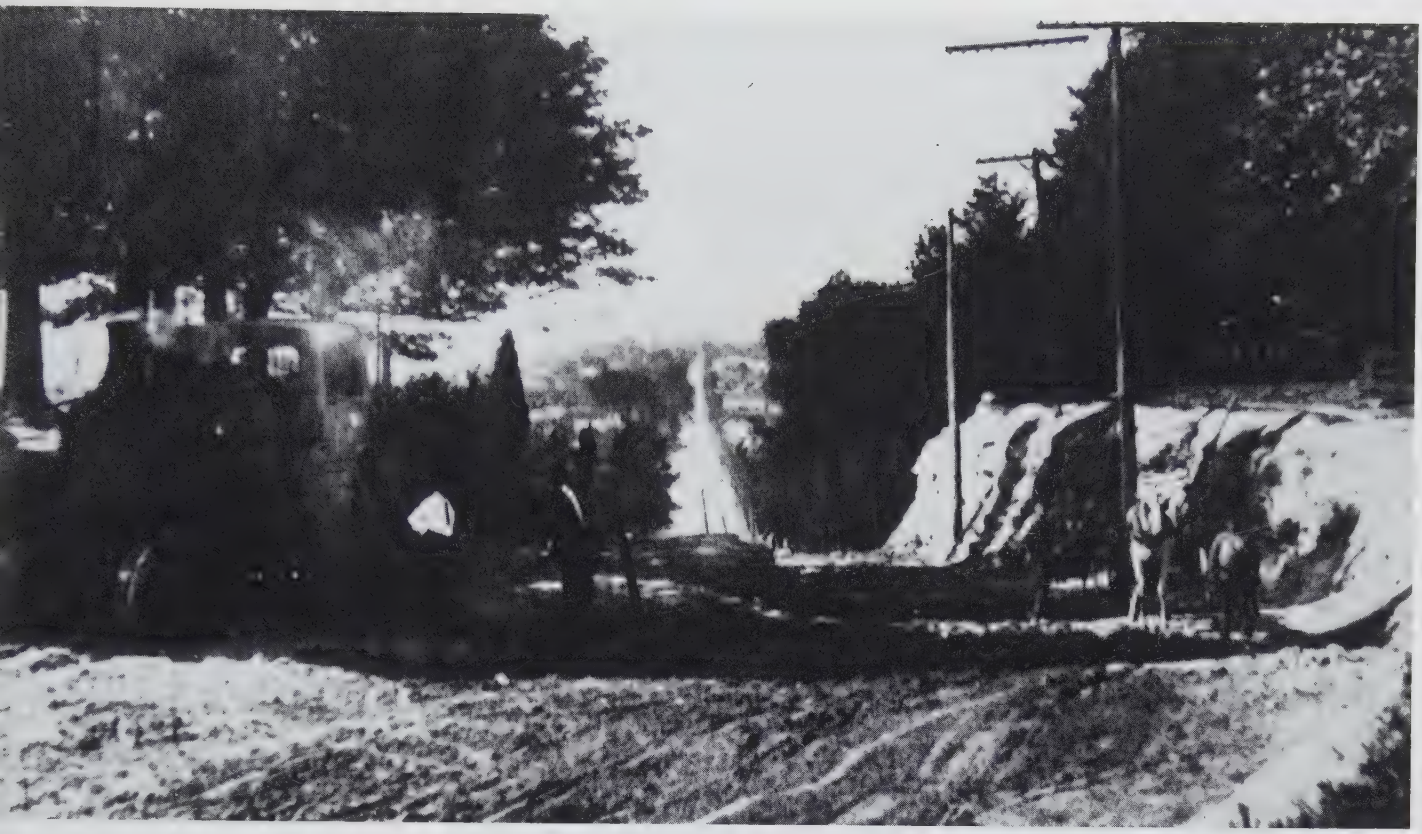
Modern transportation has made Strongsville what it is today. With the Ohio Turnpike and I-71 we use the slogan "Crossroads of the Nation", but this was not always true. You can see by this picture that about 1910 this White Steamer, made in Cleveland, had difficulty traveling on the roads of Strongsville.

It was the responsibility of farmers in the area to help with the road work at the turn of the century. Here we see farmers with their teams, in the spring of the year, scraping the roads smooth and keeping the ditches open. In the fall they hauled gravel from the river bank to help keep poor sections of roads open during the winter.

Road improvements were made but more slowly than is possible with todays technology. Here we see the Thew Automatic Shovel Co. of Lorain, Ohio working to straighten Royalton Road. This road had a bend in it as it went into what we now call Camp Cheerful. As you travel the road today you can see the ridge of shale that these men cut through to straighten the road.



Road improvements along the east half of Royalton Road



Stone Hill was cut down several times. This will change again as Pearl Road is widened south into Brunswick.

The main roads were paved with brick. Here we see a typical road crew ready to lay the large paving bricks. During the last improvement of Pearl Road, these bricks were removed.

With better roads came delivery services to your home. Here we see the Ice Man delivering ice for your icebox. Richard Pierce delivered meat to your home in his wagon.

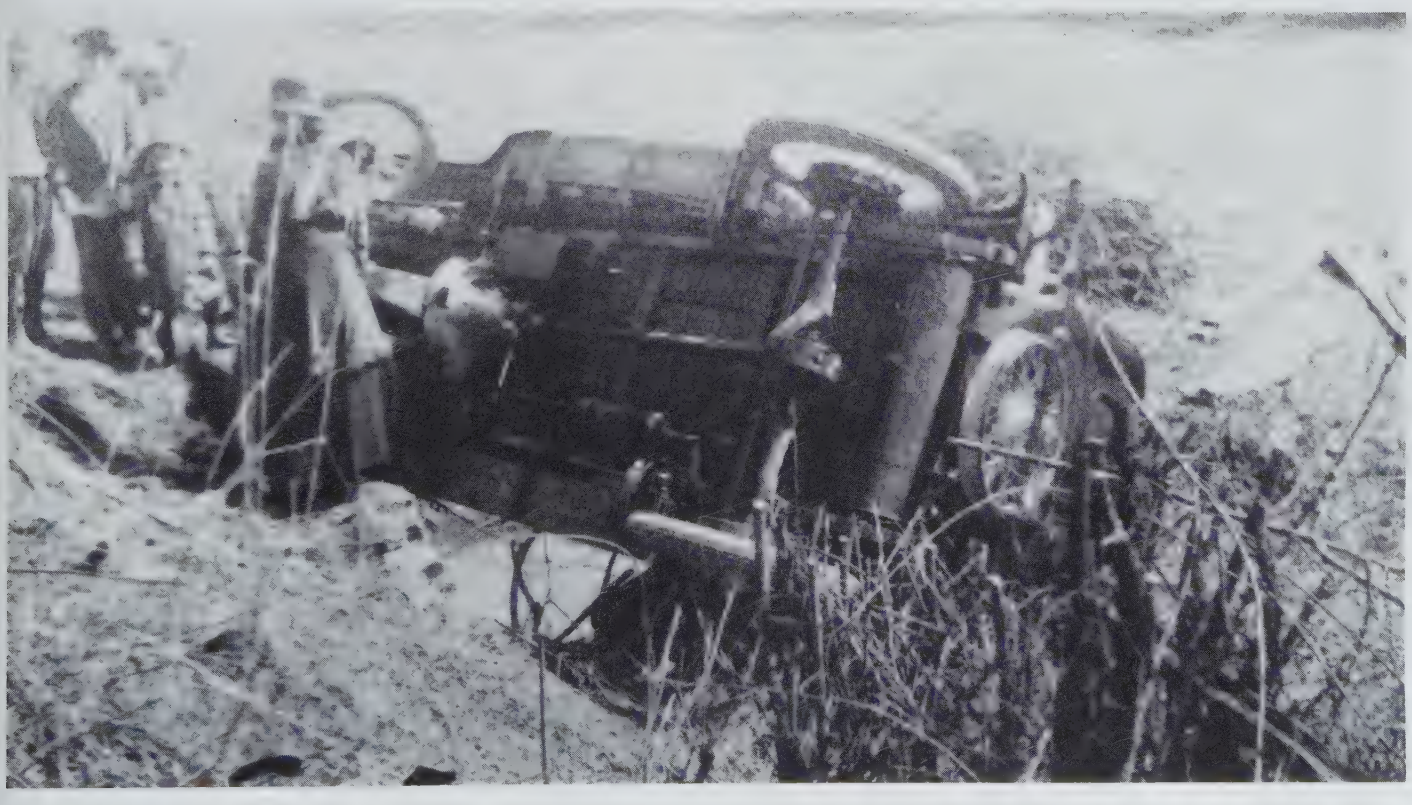
Now groceries could be delivered to your home, and you could travel to the county fair in Berea.

The Green Line brought change to the quiet community of Strongsville. You had a chance to go to the big city of Cleveland.

With the improvements of the main roads, the Green Line bus service began in 1918. It ran between Medina, Brunswick, Valley City and Strongsville to Brooklyn, the end of the city car line. Four round trips were made daily. Another route came out York Road to Royalton Road and then west to Roy's Mill (Camp Cheerful), making four trips each day. Two of these trips also carried school children. The line was later sold and purchased as a Greyhound franchise.

This view of a 1931 school bus driven by Milo Smith, reminds us that the bus transportation was not provided by the school system but by a private company. This was the bus company run by Mr. Leonard O. Bean from 1928 to 1955 when the transportation of school children was taken over by the school board. This view is on Boston Road about half way between Prospect and Marks Roads.

Not all new experiences with modern transportation were successful. Here we see a small boy looking at the new 1918 Dodge Sedan family car that he caused to end up in the ditch. It was different now than with the reins of a horse and buggy. When the driver turned to quiet the excited boy in the back seat, she did not realize her hands on the stearing wheel would also turn and cause the auto to head into the ditch.



With the building of the Ohio Turnpike through Strongsville in 1955 and the north-south I-71 in 1965, many changes have taken place. This is a view of the turnpike, under Pearl Road, near the Whitney Road crossing in the early years of the turnpike. The south-west corner of Whitney Road has greatly changed.

Road improvement came in time. This view of West 130th shows little activity as compared to today. In 1986 Pearl Road, south of 82, was improved and widened.

Photo by David Liam Kyle

The new Ehrnfelt Bridge over the East Branch of Rocky River reminds us of the past. The building of this bridge has kept Whitney road open to Eastland so our citizens could continue to travel across this part of Strongsville. The road at one time led to the Berea Brick and Tile Company on Eastland Road.

Brick had been produced along the northern part of Prospect Road as early as 1835. By 1890, Charles Bolton was making brick for local use. In 1927, John Reznik formed the Berea Brick and Tile Company that produced as much as 30,000 bricks a day. Farmers came here for tile to improve the drainage on their farms. A short rail line connected the yard with the rail line just to the west. Now the yard is used as a maintance area for the Metro Parks. The clay pits are used as hatcheries for fish.

The team of horses, driven by Will Smith, are a reminder of the past along with the threshing rig powered by a real "steam" tractor.

The Maatz Farm on Albion Road was the only Century Farm in Cuyahoga County in 1976 as researched during our National Bicentennial. The farm was purchased in 1882 by Frederick Maatz and later run by his son Arthur. The house was built in 1893 replacing the original house that was moved to the back on the property.

The old view of the Maatz Farm with the cows in the pasture at the corner of Priem and Albion Roads, has changed as the farm land was sold and Fire Station #2 was built to serve the many new residents in the growing city of Strongsville.

The old house was replaced by the present Maatz house that celebrates its 100th birthday in 1993.

The Maatz Century Farm finally came to an end with a sale of items used on the farm for many years. Here Howard Chapman demonstrates a calf yoke that prevented the calf from sneaking through a fence. Maynard Maatz keeps him under control.

Along with the dairy farmers in the Strongsville area, were also those who produced beef for the local slaughter house. As early as 1888, Richard Pierce was butchering in the area. After several location moves, Roy Pierce built this slaughter house on Westwood Drive in 1908. In 1923 Ralph D. Graves entered into partnership with Roy Pierce after working in the business. Eventually the Pierce and Graves Co. became the R. D. Graves Company. Although the R. D. Graves Co. was dissolved in the 1930's, it still kept his name after 1961 when he died. His sons assumed control. Now a development of homes covers the grounds of the old slaughter house.

In 1822 the township divided into five school districts and then into ten. Ten, one room school houses served the community for 100 years, closing in 1923. Of the ten buildings, eight still stand and are used as homes in the modern community. This is the Beebetown, (District 8) building, at recess time. The playground equipment was not like todays.

When Slab Hollow School (District 7) on what is now called Mill Hollow Lane was closed, it was purchased by the Russians. In 1931 the Club of Russian Boys at St. Theodosius Church on Starkweather Ave. in Cleveland bought shares in this old school house and worked to get it back into shape and planted evergreens in the front. They used the building as a club house at least once a week when they came from the industrial heart of Cleveland to the fresh air of the country of Strongsville. Many parties and clambakes, along with seasonal affairs, were enjoyed by all. Some of the members and their children settled in the quiet, growing community that surrounded their club house.

The St. Theodosius Church Club of Russian Boys are having a celebration in the old Slab Hollow School.

A high school had been started in 1859 but it lasted about one month. After the Old Town Hall was built the idea for a high school came up again. In 1896 that high school was established in the Old Town Hall. 13 students graduated in 1901 from the first class. In 1908 this first high school building was opened. You might note the small white building on the right side. There were two of these small white buildings, called "six holers", used by the students and faculty.

In 1916 the original high school (now the Board of Education Building) was expanded. In 1921, the new high school was built behind the first one. This building was expanded for the first time in 1950, and has undergone many more changes under the new name of Center Junior High.

In 1955 the first separate elementary school was built to the north of the High School. This was the Dexter Frank Drake building that has now become part of Center Junior High. In 1957 the next elementary was built. Helen Muraski. It was the first building to be built away from the center complex. At one time there had been 10 one room school buildings around the community. By the 1970's there were again 10 buildings serving the youth. This view was taken in 1958.
Photo by Henry Barr

A view of Strongsville High School students at the Old Town Hall in 1906

The graduating class of 1912

A "Tom Thumb" Wedding in the Old Town Hall about 1917.

The graduating class of 1920

A second grade class in1921-22 poses in front of the Congregational Church. The teacher is Lydia Richards. Not all names are known but moving from the left to right, in the (back row) Edith Wilder, Ruby Calvert, Laura Ogilvy, Wilma Burnham, Rose Cook, Ruth Kirby and Gladys Lyons; (middle row) Elmer Siedel, Hilda Finley, Corwin Taylor and L. Neumeyer; (front row) Bessie Bradley, Helen and Hilda Szentpetery (twins), Mary Vargouic, Ethel Pavlik, Gertrude Hatfield, Edna Lant, and Gertrude Pflug: (seated) John Doane, Bernard Siedel, Robert Wick, and Alfred Ralph Graves.

Basketball in 1929. Standing is Coach Stone, Gordon Morton, Clark Fish, and manager Raymond Neumeyer. Seated are George Siedel, Charles Sprague, Captain Charles Graves, John Mellar and Paul Pavilik.

Girls Basketball in 1926. Standing from left to right are: Gertrude Bader, Margaret Taliak, Ruth Poots, Patricia de Podesta, Marie Morton, Ruth Smith, Julia Mokren, Florence Wolfe, and Irene Drake.

A variety of homes have graced our community. The Beifuss-Teuscher Home was new in the 1930's. The last building of the J. P. Roof estate still stands in the community, now a part of a home. It served the city as a library before it was moved from the center of town.

The Stone-Budweg House, built in 1856 on Lunn Road, has changed little over the years.

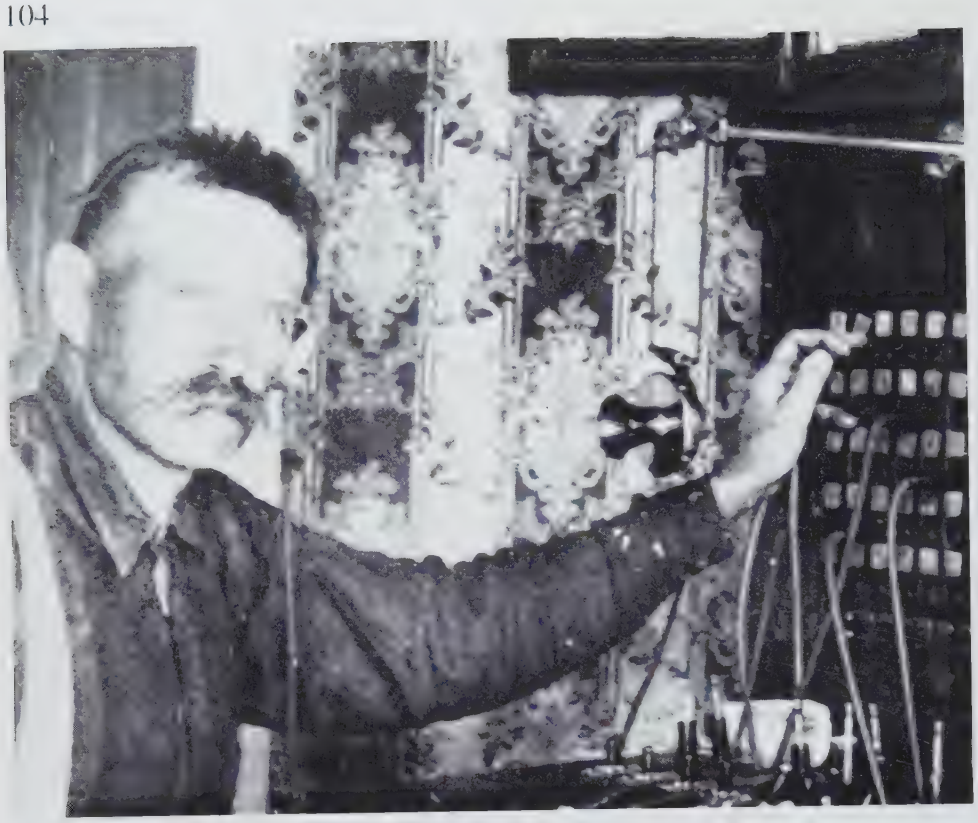
The McConnell-Cumberworth Home, built about 1873, on the corner of Shermer and Pearl, is a fine example of a Victorian home.

The McConnell-Cumberworth Home was purchased in the early 1950's by William and Dorothy Cumberworth and restored to its present state. The house was built by Rev. A. W. Knowlton in 1873 but purchased in 1875 by Dr. J. B. McConnell who lived there for many years.

Edgar M. Merrick came to Strongsville in 1838 where his father and grandfather had settled. Edgar had spent several years in Mississippi where he learned the carpenter and joiners trade. He helped to build the home of Jefferson Davis in Biloxi. In 1839 he married Lucianna Greene Whitman and purchased his homestead in 1840 on Drake Rd. Here he built his home and moved a barn to the property. He built other homes, such as the one across the street, for his son, Joseph, when he returned from the Civil War. Today the home is owned by Mr. & Mrs. Richard Hawk who are working to restore this home.

On June 28, 1924 a tornado destroyed part of the north-west corner of our town. This was the corner of Sprague and Prospect Roads that is now in Berea. The area was called Spraguetown by the conductors on the interurban line.

Charles Drake, son of early pioneer Asa Drake, was born in Strongsville in1822. His wife, Elizabeth Beaham Drake, sits with two of her grandchildren. On the right is Ina Drake Morton and on the left is Nola Ordner Weideman.



George Grant Atkinson, the first mayor of the Village in 1927, was involved in many businesses in the community of Strongsville. Born in 1865, he moved to Strongsville with his new wife in 1889.

Three generations of the Poots Family are shown here (from left to right) Samuel, Ellsworth, and John Poots

Gertrude Roe Collier

Richard and Julia Green Pierce with their oldest son, John Frank Pierce

The boys are playing ball on the Commons in about 1916. The second from the right on the bottom row is E. A. (Ben) Sprague.

The date is about 1916. These young adults are not known.

In 1931 Strongsville was ready for bigger fires with the delivery of a real fire truck. The men on the truck are Charles Kerr, Paul Wyrick, Everette Root, Clark Fish, Glenn Barnswell, George Umpleby, Fire Chief Lawrence Hirt (behind the wheel), and Mayor L. O. Bean.

The 1932 fire truck replaced this 1923 two wheeled chemical cart that had been purchased by public subscription. Miriam Heazlit and Leonora Bean show the old cart.

A Clement Family reunion in 1909

A Bartlett reunion just before the turn of the century

The 1948 Police Force. Standing from left to right are: Charles Graves, Charles Sperber, William Thompson, Robert Poots, Myron Hackley, Clifford Peebles, and Lloyd Killian.

In 1986 Fire Chief Jerome receives new rescue squad vehicles with Mayor Ehrnfelt. Photo by David Liam Kyle

Standing in front of their home are William and Eva Drake Wheller. Shown in the front row from left to right are: Nola Ordner Weideman, Jane Drake Brodie, Elizabeth Drake and Elsie Ordner Duncan. The home was on Pearl Road just north of the Wheller Blacksmith Shop that is now the parking lot of the Crossroads Market Plaza Mall.

This house at the first bend in Westwood Road was in the White family from 1847 to 1934. Before that the land belonged to Jubil Whitney. In 1934, Mr. Howard Ritchie became the owner. His wife, Josephine has resided there since Howard's death in 1979. The front porch has been removed.

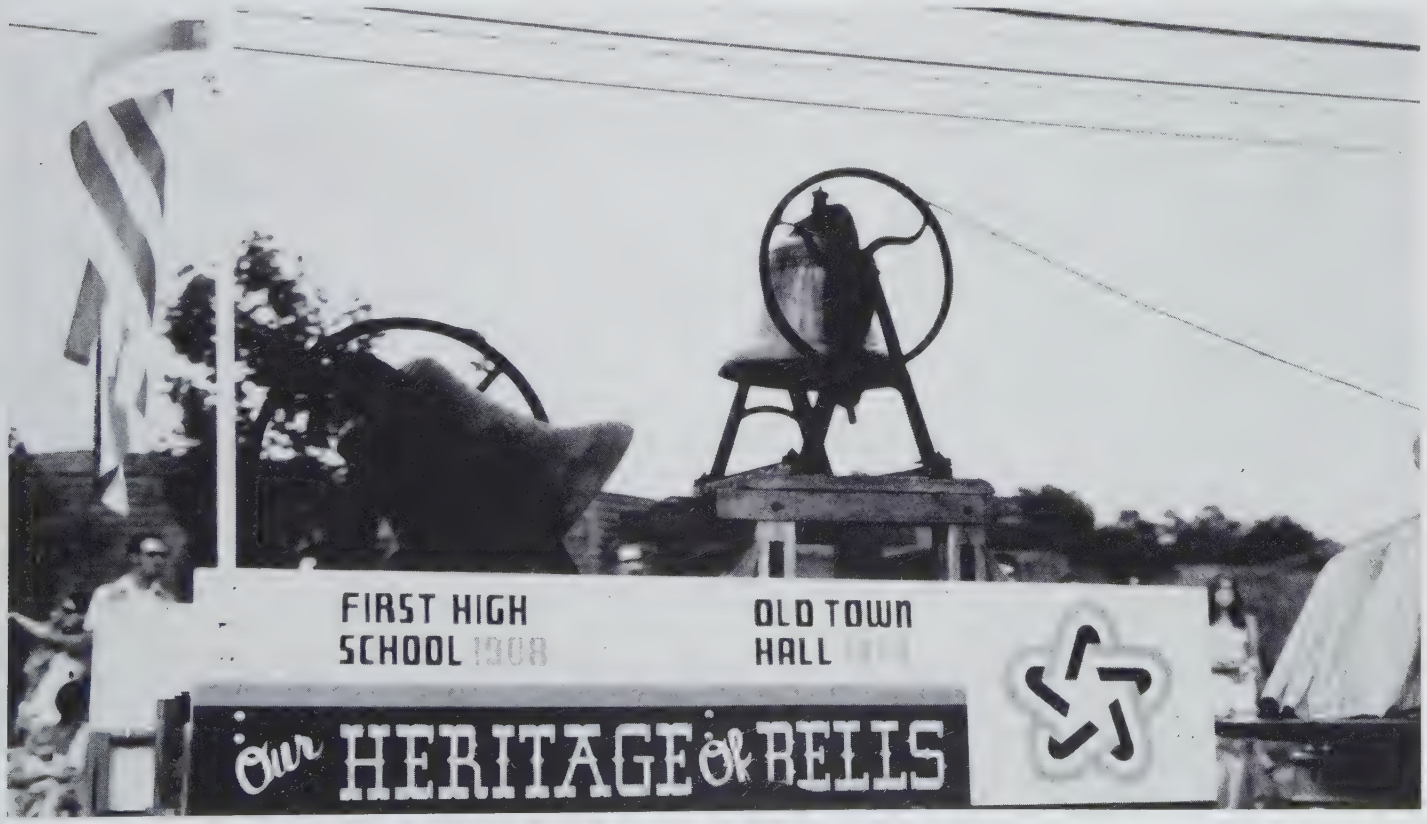
A Strongsville Homecoming scene in 1948

This Beebetown store was originally a cheese factory on South Marks Road. Owned by Isaac Lewis, it was moved to the corner of Marks and Boston Roads and became a store. This residence and store was later destroyed by fire.

The Elmer Drake home stands on Westwood Drive. The little girl in white with the doll buggy is Velda Drake Chapman.

This 1962 view of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and School shows the site with the Quonset hut style church before the 1965 Palm Sunday tornado destroyed the church and damaged the school. Photo by Henry Barr

In 1976 we celebrated our Nations Bicentennial with soldiers from that period of history. The bells were removed from the Old Town Hall and the first high school for use on a float during the activities that year.



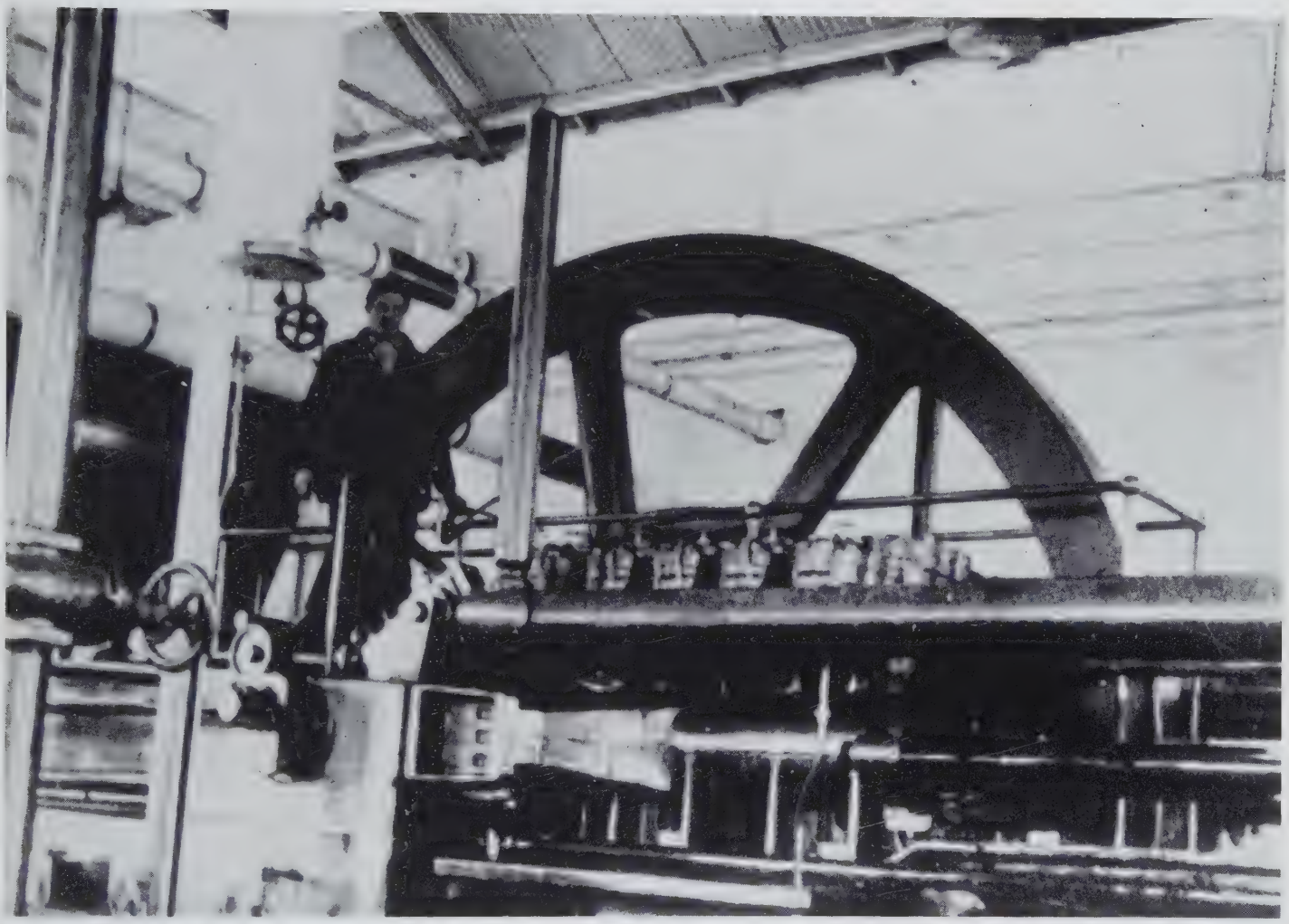
Strongsville Savings and Loan, a unique institution, serves the Strongsville area and surrounding communities. Here, in 1986, celebrating their 25th anniversary, are: (from left to right) John Boros, Mel Siedel, Thomas Perciak, Walter Ehrnfelt, Elton Bedford and Joan Dzurilla.

Presidents who have served the Strongsville Chamber of Commerce during the past 50 years are shown here preparing to cut the Chamber's birthday cake at a recent luncheon meeting. The leaders and the years of the presidency are (from left, front row): Donald Fernald, 1980; Russell Gifford, 1950; Paul Vining, 1972; Mary Ann Zirker, 1988; and Jim James Jr., 1963, 1964 and 1965. Back row (from left) are: Millar Jardine, 1956; Rev. Edwin Brigham, 1960; Ed Latawiec, 1969; Fred Dewey, 1966, 1967 and 1968; Mike Kalinich, 1970 and 1971; Tom Burichin, 1989, 1990 and 1991; Ray Haseley, 1986 and 1987; Richard Larson, 1981 and 1982, and Bob Bourne, 1983, 1984 and 1985.
Photos from Thomas Cooke Photography and Sandra C. Vining.

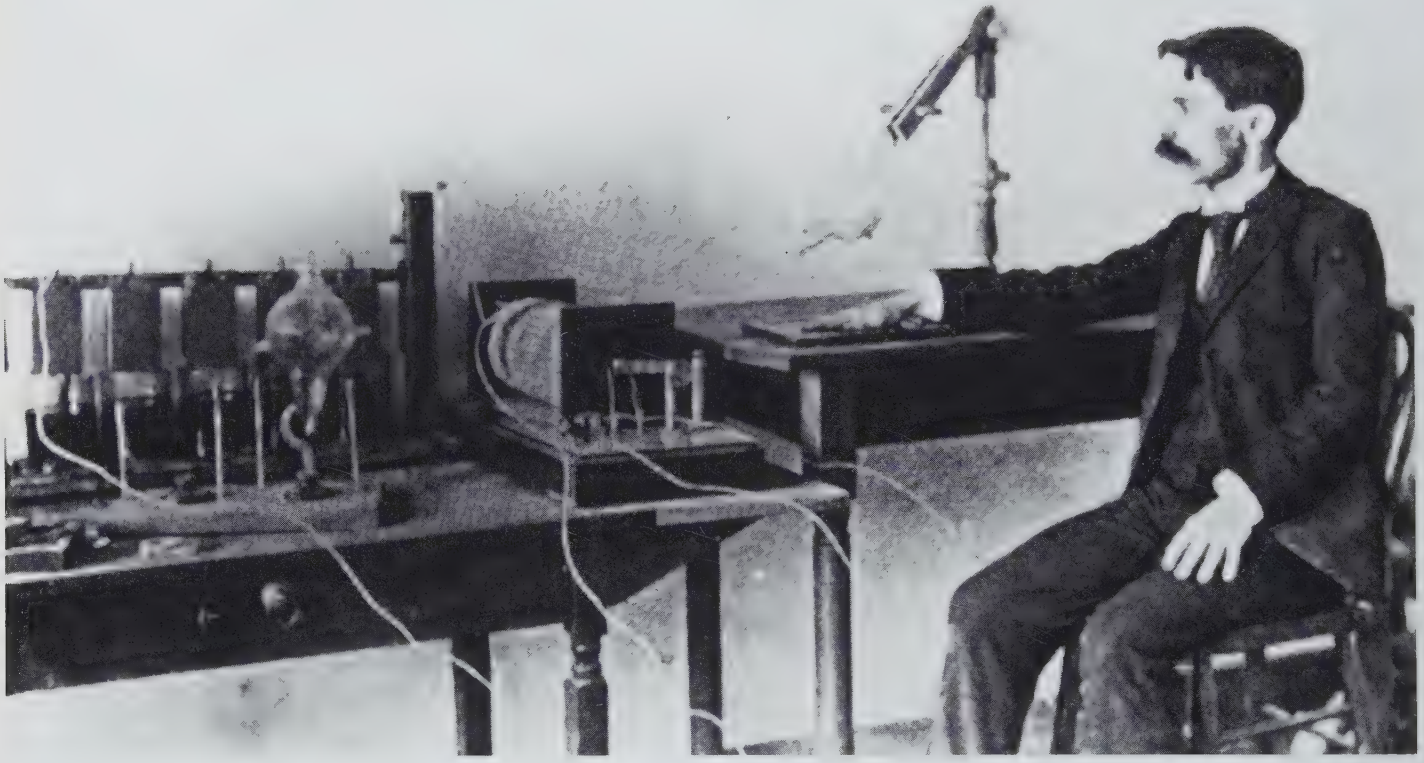
Strongsville Central School is shown here about 1912. (Top row - left to right) Teacher Miss Bowman, Mildred Tomes, Esther Feightner, Beatrice Tomes, Dorothy Fish, Gladys Wheller, Velda Drake, Floyd Waters and Helen Merrick. (Second Row) Wm Mills, Tod Mills, Mable Brown, Edna Spafford, Gladys Bradley and Hilda Fish, _____. (Third Row) _____, Leonard Merrick, Roy Feightner, Gordon Clemet and Preston Ehrbar. (Bottom Row) Henrietta Mills, Nelson Mills, Willie Tomes, Gertrude Roe, _____, Ben Wheller. The two boys at the bottom are Ben Bowman, and _____ Waters.

Here are the 5th and 6th Grade classes at Central School about 1923. The teacher is Grace Steen. (Top row, Left to Right) Eldon Roe, Raymond Calvert, Frederick Wilder, _____, Paul Pavlik, Raymond Neumeyer and Charles Leser. (Second row from top) Clark Fish, George Siedel, John Wilson, _____, _____, Charles Graves, _____, _____, Melvin Siedel. (Third row from top) Margaret Fish, Lula Wheller, Regina _____, Violet _____, Blanche _____, Bernice Gifford, Mary Kathryn Cook, and Leona Siedel. (Second row from the bottom) Ruth Poots, Eleanor Pflug, Margaret Heckle, Mary Korack, Geneva Kirby, _____, Mildred Killian, Frieda Szentpetry, Charlotte Poots. (Bottom row) Edward Carpenter, Norris Crumpler, Russell Rosenberger, Allison O'Brien, Hobart Hirt, Herman Szentpetery, Charles Gilmour, Herbert _____, Charles Morton.

The Buckeye Pipe Line pumping station is located at the intersection of Prospect Road and Boston Road. The line was laid on the south side of Boston Road. William C. Smith of Beebetown was in charge of laying the line and he worked on the buildings. Although the company was formed in 1886, this land was not purchased until 1890.

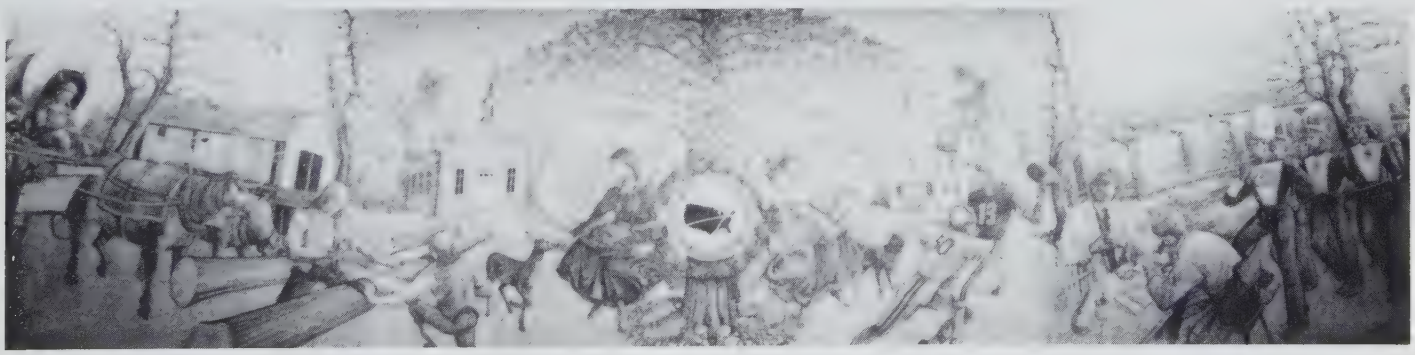


The pumps inside the buildings that pumped the crude oil over the 7500 mile system



Dr. Dayton C. Miller, born in Strongsville in 1866, invented the first American photographic x-ray machine when he was a 30-year-old professor at Case Tech. This invention changed the future of medicine in America and the world. His mother was Vienna Pomeroy, the daughter of Alanson Pomeroy, who built the Pomeroy House. His father was Charles Webster Dewey Miller who joined with his brothers-in-law to develop the Cleveland Southwestern Interurban Electric system that helped to develop rural areas of Ohio. It was Dr. George Crile who first brought a patient to Dr. Miller's Case laboratory in 1896 to see if Miller's machine could detect what was wrong with the patient's painful arm. The photographic plate revealed a sharp jagged bone that had to be re-set by Dr. Crile to relieve the patient's pain. At an early age, Dayton Miller had moved, with his parents, to Berea.

Welcome signs greet visitors to the second largest community in Cuyahoga County. Strongsville is unique in that it has kept most of the original 25 square miles of the original township.



The mural in the Council Chamber reminds us of our history. It was painted by local Strongsville artist Robert Soellner.

We end with a view of the Commons where the story of Strongsville began. Here with the Spring flowers, new growth and beauty signal the future of our community. It will continue to grow and bloom for future generations.

The Future Of The Past Is In Your Hands